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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study were: (1) to determine if unique or shared viewpoints existed between teachers and parents concerning developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) and developmentally inappropriate practices (DIP); (2) to investigate differences between participants' subjective beliefs about DAP and DIP; and (3) to explore relationships between the viewpoints and families' and teachers' demographic information. Fifteen teachers and fifteen parents of children from three Head Start settings participated in the study. Q-methodology was used to structure the data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data. Two contrasting beliefs about DAP and DIP emerged from the analysis. Results indicate a shared belief that early childhood practices should be naturally motivating and problem-solving activities, where the program explores a multitude of diversity issues, with open communication among all the stakeholders. A secondary belief system existed that reflected the continuum from teacher-directed to child-initiated activities. (Contains 1 figure, 3 tables, and 63 references.) (Author/SLD)

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Parents' and Teachers' Subjective Beliefs About Developmentally Appropriate Practices

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were to determine if unique or shared viewpoints existed between teachers and parents concerning developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) and developmentally inappropriate practices (DIP), investigate differences between participants' subjective beliefs about DAP and DIP, and explore relationships between the viewpoints and families' and teachers' demographic information. Fifteen teachers and 15 parents of children, from three Head Start settings, participated in the study. Q-methodology was used to structure the data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data. Two contrasting beliefs about DAP and DIP emerged from the analysis. Results indicated a shared belief that early childhood practices should be naturally motivating and problem-solving activities, where the program explores a multitude of diversity issues, with open communication among all the stakeholders. A secondary belief system existed that represented the continuum from teacher-directed to child-initiated activities.

Parents' and Teachers' Subjective Beliefs About Developmentally Appropriate Practices

Parents, teachers, and researchers intuitively know many of the benefits of good quality early childhood education (ECE). The crux of the issue is knowing the intricacies of what exactly constitutes good quality ECE? Currently, educational policy and practice for young children is, to a large extent, governed by professional bodies like the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI). The defining qualities of best practice are provided in numerous monographs and position statements published by the NAEYC and ACEI, and arguably the most prominent and controversial is the Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) document (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). In essence, the DAP document is an evolving response to a growing concern for quality in ECE settings that serve record numbers of young children. The document's intent is to serve as a guideline for early childhood personnel, administrators, and parents. DAP is an evolving document and the divergence of content between the first edition (DAP; Bredekamp, 1987) and the second edition (DAP; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) is a reflection of a broader pedagogical changes that recognize that a child's development is the outcome of multiple synergistic factors. By stressing the role of culture, context, and collaboration between ECE professionals and the family, the 1997 DAP document indirectly acknowledges that "by enhancing proximal processes and environments, it is possible to increase the extent of actualized genetic potentials for developmental competence [of a child]" (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994, p 568).

The influence of the DAP documents is clear. The 1987 document was published with the claim that it represented the views of the NAEYC and its members (Bredekamp, 1987), and by 1997, the NAEYC had sold more than half a million copies of the DAP book (Bredekamp &

Copple, 1997). During a White House conference on childcare, the president of the USA referred to the military as an example of providers of high quality and appropriate practices, stating that over 75% of the programs were NAEYC accredited (Clinton, 1997). Thus, the sales of the document, the distribution of DAP material, membership of NAEYC increasing to over 100,000 professionals in 1997 (NAEYC, 1998), and apparent political support implies that we are currently involved in a pivotal early childhood educational reform based to a large extent on DAP principles.

With the increased influence of the NAEYC, there has been an accumulation of research that purports to validate the appropriateness of DAP and inappropriateness of developmentally inappropriate practices (DIP). For example, previous studies have investigated DAP and DIP in relation to kindergarten teachers' beliefs, parents' and teachers' priorities for kindergarten curricula, social-emotional development, peer competence, stress, academic benefits, socioeconomic status (SES), and race (Ernest, 1999). Coinciding with the empirical validation of DAP have been theoretical and philosophical questions that challenge certain assumptions made by the NAEYC concerning what is considered appropriate for all young children. Although many authors believed that DAP were suitable for all children (Charlesworth, 1998a, 1998b), critics of DAP have raised several important questions. Among the criticisms have been arguments that the 1987 DAP document reflected inherent political, cultural, and theoretical biases (Lubeck, 1998a, 1998b) and some writers felt that the 1987 DAP document did not adequately address many issues related to children with disabilities (Winton, 1995).

In response to many of the criticisms, the changes within the 1997 document reflected "NAEYC's current best understanding of theory and research regarding how children learn as shared beliefs about what practices are most supportive and respectful of children's healthy development" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. vi). Running parallel to--and interrelated with--

the discussions of DAP, have been discussions concerning the increased focus on the role of the family in ECE (Kagan, 1994; Powell, 1994; Weiss, 1988). For example, many local programs have been required to give priority to family member-child interaction and to the parental role in child development and learning (Washington & Bailey, 1995).

One potential barrier to parent-teacher collaboration is evidence that professionals adhering to DAP principles (often providing child centered approaches to education) may be at odds with many family members' images of what are considered appropriate settings and priorities for young children (Powell, 1995). Past research has indicated that 'parents' as a group were more likely to rate intellectual goals as relatively more important than teachers rated the same practices, and parents rated social skills at a lower degree of importance than teachers rated the social skills (Dank, 1978; Kean, 1980). Additional research has reported that parents tend to want teachers with more formal authoritarian teaching styles that focused on cognitively oriented methods and teacher-directed instruction (Hill, 1984; Smith, 1980; Van Cleaf, 1979), and there is some evidence that parents seek out programs that mesh with the family's educational philosophy (Hyson, Hirsh-Pasek, & Rescorla, 1990). When past research has explored differences within parent's beliefs about educational practices, the reports indicate that although some parents hold views that are compatible with DAP, it is believed that many parents have views of ECE practices that are considered DIP (Holloway, Rambaud, Fuller, & Eggers-Pierola, 1995). It is thought that this variance in parental beliefs may be associated with SES, with lower SES correlated to more authoritarian practices (Miller, 1988).

Several reasons for the differences in beliefs between teachers and parents have been provided by Delpit (1995). In emphasizing cultural, educational, and economic differences that often reside between teachers and parents, Delpit maintained that minority and low-income parents value basic skills over creative thinking because they believe the basic skills are

necessary to obtain success in the dominant culture. Research by Rescorla et al. (1990) and Stipek, Milburn Clements, and Milburn (1992) supports this position.

As someone reads through the literature, it becomes clear that a common theme is the documentation of differences between groups of people. Even if an article studies the similarities between groups of people, the groups are always defined by social categories (all parents as a group, all teachers as a group, all low-SES people as a group, all African-Americans as a group, etc.). For example, in discussing some of the similarities and differences between mothers, fathers and teachers of young children, Knudsen-Lindauer and Harris (1989) found that mothers and fathers consider counting, reading, and writing to be more important skills for children for kindergarten readiness than the teachers. But when looking for the similarities within the groups, the relative rankings of the 3 R's show a consistent pattern of relative unimportance. Teachers, mothers, and fathers consistently ranked such items as listening, self-confidence, following directions, independence, sharing with other children, curiosity, and waiting one's turn as more important than counting, reading, and writing. Thus, when the teachers, mothers, and fathers were asked to rank the items in relation to other items (the ratings of items were dependent on the other items rather than each item being independent of all other items) the results indicated a greater similarity between the groups rather than differences between the groups. So even though mothers and fathers were more likely that teachers to agree that the 3 R's, these same mothers and fathers did not believe that the 3 R's were more important than many of the social skills valued by ECE professionals. The Knudsen-Lindauer and Harris (1989) article indicates that when using different research methodologies (ranking items vs. scaling) the quantitative differences in mean scores were overshadowed by the degree of similarity in the ranking scores.

The consistent limitation of all the articles above, is the a priori assumption that certain social groups of people will possess a system of beliefs that are similar to each other. All the

above studies concluded with statements that generalized across a group. So, for the Knudsen-Lindauer and Harris (1989) article, 'mothers' as a group) and fathers' (as a group) rated reading, writing, and arithmetic as more important skills to have (when compared to teachers) for young children to have when they entered kindergartners. Due to the presuppositions that the researchers had concerning the homogeneity within the social groups, there was no consideration that some mothers may have a system of beliefs that are similar to several fathers' beliefs, and similar to several teachers' beliefs. In turn, this group of people may have a different system of beliefs when compared to another group of mothers, fathers, and teachers. Few of the studies that have explored beliefs about ECE practices (with the notable exception of Lubeck's, 1985, and O'Brien's 1997 ethnographies) have subjective opinions been explored.

Much of the empirical evidence collected about DAP has used objective scales such as the Teacher Beliefs Scale (Charlesworth, Hart, Burts, & Hernandez, 1991; Charlesworth, Hart, Burts, Thomasson, et al., 1993) and the Classroom Practices Inventory (Hyson et al., 1990). These objective scales give the researcher an indication of the how developmentally appropriate someone is, using a number of items that are considered appropriate and a number of items considered inappropriate. When a research participant responds to these items on the scale, it is not possible for the person to note whether they think the item is appropriate or not: This has already been decided, by the researchers, a priori. Although the usefulness of using objective scales is certain, there has been a lack of empirical studies that have evaluated subjective beliefs about DAP. Here, a subjective system of belief refers to what someone believes is appropriate and inappropriate, but from that person's point of view. Thus, no external criteria are used to evaluate whether a person is more or less appropriate than anyone else, and no one tries to describe someone else's system of beliefs.

Wittgenstein (1971) believed that a person's response to an objective measure may be

different from the meaning assumed by the observer or anyone else: If a person chooses to ignore this potential difference, then Wittgenstein believed that the person is unwilling to accept what is before one's eyes and to prefer the artificial to the natural. In the same way, if one is interested in measuring the similarity between different people's attitudes, expectations, or opinions at a given time, a subjective analysis is not only appropriate but also desirable (Whiting, 1955). First it is necessary to have each person describe their own system of beliefs, from their point of view, and then, it is possible to look for similarities and differences among and within these people's beliefs.

For ECE programs to be successful, the development of the child should not be considered as an individual entity, but should be considered in a broader context of the family, the family's culture, and social influences (Kontos, 1991; Powell, 1995; Weiss, 1988). Even though teachers spend a relatively large amount of time with the child during the day, but they are just one of many factors that influence the child's development (Craig, 1996). For ECE professionals to collaborate with parents and provide the most appropriate programs for children, it remains necessary to explore how teachers' and parents' describe their beliefs about early childhood practices from their individual points of view.

The present study sought to explore subjective beliefs of teachers and parents by asking participants to evaluate the relative appropriateness or inappropriateness of 60 early childhood practices in relation to each other. Q-methodology was used to explore parents' and teachers' beliefs, as the method does not require a priori hypotheses to be made concerning the outcomes of the study. Rather, any similarities or differences in the participant's beliefs were to be found empirically. Specifically, this study investigated (a) if unique or shared viewpoints existed between teachers and parents concerning DAP and DIP, (b) the relationships between the ECE practices that are considered more or less appropriate and inappropriate by the participants, and

(c) whether the shared or unique viewpoints were related to the participant's demographic information.

METHOD

Q-methodology was utilized as a way to explore the subjective beliefs of teachers and parents concerning DAP and DIP. In this method, a number of participants are asked to sort a number of cards along a predetermined quasi-normal continuum. The method can be described in three parts: Selecting items, selecting participants, and conducting the Q-sort.

Selection of Items

The primary intent of this study was to study teachers and parents beliefs about early childhood practices. The NAEYC is considered the largest and most influential organization that affects how early childhood educators work with young children. Therefore, a decision was made to use the most recent DAP document (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) to provide a quasi-naturalistic concourse of statements that represent a range of appropriate and inappropriate practices. An appropriate and somewhat desirable number of statements to structure in a Q-sample is somewhere in the region of 60 cards (Kerlinger, 1986; Sexton, Snyder, Wadsworth, Jardine, & Ernest 1998; Thompson, 1980). Fisher's (1935) experimental design was used to structure the selection of items. In the DAP document, six categories provide examples that "contrast appropriate, excellent practices . . . with inappropriate, less effective practices" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 123). The six categories in the document are (1) creating a caring community of learners, (2) teaching to enhance development and learning, (3) constructing appropriate curriculum, (4) assessing children's learning and development, (5) reciprocal relationships with parents, and (6) program policies. An a priori decision was made to select a nonprobability quota sample of items from each of the categories. This design allows the researcher to use "knowledge of strata of the population . . . to select sample members [items]

that are representative, 'typical,' and suitable for certain research purposes" (Kerlinger, 1986, p. 129).

Initially, six statements were systematically chosen from the six DAP categories and the six DIP categories in the DAP document, creating a sample of 72 statements. Three national experts (chosen for their knowledge concerning the DAP construct) were requested to clarify whether each statement represented an appropriate, an inappropriate practice, or whether they were unsure. An item was retained in the pool of items if all three experts agreed that the item was an appropriate item or all three agreed that the item was inappropriate.

The final 60 items used in Q-sort were categorized in the same way by all three experts and represented five appropriate and 5 inappropriate items for each of the 6 NAEYC categories. It should be noted that the classification of items into different categories is solely to aid in creating a representative sample of the construct under study (in this case early childhood practices). It was not the intention of this research study to validate whether the participants sorted the cards in a similar way as the experts, rather Q-methodology provides a way for a sample of people to define how they would group the ECE statements together (i.e., the participants define what items should be considered more and less appropriate and inappropriate). Finally, the statements were read for their clarity and readability and altered as necessary.

Selection of Participants

Q-methodology seeks to uncover phenomena of interest and does not seek to determine the proportion of people in a population that believe one point of view or another. One artifact that makes the method unusual is that during a principal components analysis (PCA), it treats the items as people and the people as items: The method groups people together rather than items together. Therefore, for Q-methodology to be useful, it is only necessary to have a few (i.e., 3/4

people) share a common belief to provide stable results (Kerlinger, 1986). For statistical and practical reasons, researchers recommend the number of participants to be approximately one half the number of items contained in the Q-sample (Brown, 1986; Dennis, 1986; Sexton et al., 1998; Thompson, 1980). In providing a theoretical justification for using a small numbers of participants, Brown (1980, pp. 191-192) mused

> How is it possible, the question is asked, to generalize to the population when employing a sample of only 30 or so? In Q-technique studies, however, the subjects have the status of variables rather than of sample elements; the term "sample" refers to the set of items. All that is required are enough subjects to establish the existence of a factor [component] for purposes of comparing one factor [component] with another. What proportion of the population belongs in one factor [component] rather than another is a wholly different matter and one about which Q technique as such is not concerned.

The statistical components and resulting person viewpoints that emerge from an analysis contain actual perceptions about phenomena. Using an analogy, Stephenson (1953, p. 5) noted that the proportions of people with blue, gray, green, and other eye colors involve large numbers, "but the fact of blueness as such is in no way dependent upon the facts of such proportions." If I want to determine a topology of eye color, I only need to observe three or four people with blue eyes (one component of the typology) to state that one type of eye color in the population is 'Blue.' One or two people might have cobalt dark blue eyes, a couple might have light blue eyes, but all can be considered 'Blue.' The addition of more people in my sample cannot change the discovery that a type of eye color in the population is Blue. Therefore, the sample only needs as many people as is necessary to uncover a topology of beliefs about ECE practices.

This nature of this study is exploratory, and no a priori assumptions are made about any person's belief structure. As McKeown and Thomas (1988 p. 37) noted, a Q-study compares operant subjective phenomena and "mere availability, therefore, is one criterion for creating the person-samples." Three Head Start centers in the Northeast United States were contacted and asked if teachers and parents of Head Start children would be willing to participate in the study.

Any teacher or parent was included in the study if they agreed that they wished to, and completed the Q-sort. Once data from 15 teachers and 15 parents had been collected, analyses of the data were undertaken. Descriptive characteristics of the participants are given in Table 1.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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Q-Sort Procedure

Participants were asked to subjectively rank the 60 DAP-DIP items into a quasi-normal, platykurtic distribution (see Figure 1; Block, 1956). The continuum used an odd number of reference points (e.g., using 11 locations to place the statements along the continuum of ECE appropriateness). One end of the continuum was anchored with the statement Most Inappropriate and the opposite end of the continuum was anchored with the statement Most Appropriate. The statements in the center of the distribution were anchored Neutral. The distribution required the participants to place 3 cards at both ends of the distribution, 4 cards at the next point, 4 cards at the next point, 7 cards at the next point, 7 cards at the next point, with 10 cards placed in the middle or neutral position. The cards were created by printing each of the 60 statements onto a 5" by 3" inch index card.

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Insert Figure 1 about here

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To reduce the chance of bias, Q-methodologists recommend the instructions for the placement of the cards to be given in a standardized format (Stainton Rogers, 1995). Therefore, the participants were read a standardized list of instructions that explained the sorting procedure. First, the parents and the teachers were asked to read through all of the statements to gain an

impression of the range of ECE practices. Second, the participants were asked to sort the cards into three general piles. Sorting the cards into the three piles has the effect of reducing the amount of information that is necessary to cognitively process at one time (Sexton et al., 1998). The participants were told that the three piles should represent the participants' perceptions of the most inappropriate statements (to the left), neutral statements (in the middle), and the most appropriate statements (to the right) about ECE practices.

Third, the participants were asked to rearrange the cards into the forced distribution. For example, using the cards considered the most appropriate statements, the participants rearranged these cards so that 3 cards that were considered the most appropriate ECE practices were placed under the +5 referent point. Then, scrutinizing the remaining appropriate cards, the participant placed the next 4 most appropriate statements under the +4 referent point. This procedure was repeated until all the cards from the most appropriate pile were placed into the distribution. The same process was applied to the pile of cards considered the most inappropriate statements. Finally, the cards considered to be neutral statements were sorted. The participant and an independent rater recorded the results of the sort, and the two recordings were checked for agreement. For all 30 Q-sorts, there was 100% agreement between the two recordings. After completion of the Q-sort, the participants were asked to complete the demographic form.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The primary intention of this study was to explore the potential similarities and differences in parents' and teachers' subjective beliefs about DAP. Data collected in the study were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics with PQMethod Version 2.08 (Schmolck, 1999) and SPSS version 9.0 (Norušis, 1998). PQMethod is statistical software structured to the requirements of Q studies. Specifically, it allows the researcher to easily enter data (Q-sorts) in the way the data is collected (i.e., as a quasi-normal distribution of statement

numbers). Once the data is entered, the analysis produces a number of components that represent different viewpoints about the construct under study. The analysis computes a number of 'component arrays' that represent different points of view and gives the researcher an indication of each person's degree of association with each of the different points of view.

Existence Of Unique Or Shared Viewpoints

The first research question sought to determine whether teachers and family members have unique or shared viewpoints concerning what are considered developmentally appropriate and developmentally inappropriate practices? To answer this question, a Q-technique Principal Components Analysis was conduced. The a priori criteria for deciding the number of components to retain and rotate were (a) an eigenvalue greater than 1 (McKeown & Thomas, 1988), (b) having at least four pure associations on a principal component, with a structure coefficient of at least /.40/ (Dennis, 1986), and (c) determining component membership using visualization of the scree plot (Stevens, 1996). Due to the nature of the data, three potential solutions to the PCA were considered (Gorsuch, 1983). These were (a) rotating the solution to varimax criteria, (b) interpreting a direct oblimin oblique solution, and (c) interpreting the unrotated PCA solution. A choice was made to analyze the unrotated PCA solution which was judged to be the simplest interpretation. The decision was based on recommendations given by Brown (1981), Rhoads and Sun (1994) and Brown (personal communication, September 1999).

Using PCA without using a rotation method will often result in many or all of the participants being associated with the first component. The second component is then often suggestive of a secondary dynamic that is unrelated, but complimentary, to the first viewpoint (Rhoads & Sun, 1994). Therefore, two components were extracted from the analysis for further exploration. The respondent's structure coefficients for the two orthogonal viewpoints are presented in Table 1. Viewpoint A and Viewpoint B accounted for 57% and 6% of the variance,

respectively. Even though the principal components are orthogonal (perfectly uncorrelated to each other) the resulting viewpoint arrays may be correlated with each other. From the analysis, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient between the two viewpoint arrays was equal to .04.

All 30 respondents had positive structure coefficients greater than or equal to .40 on Viewpoint A. The respondents' associations with Viewpoint B were bipolar. Participants 1-15, 20, 23, and 28 (60% of all the participants) have a negative association with this viewpoint (referred to as Group Y participants - the progressivists), and all other participants (40% of the participants) have a positive association with this viewpoint (referred to as Group X participants - the traditionalists). As all thirty peoples associated with the first component (or viewpoint) to a statistically significant and noteworthy degree, this indicates a single belief structure that all people associate with. The second viewpoint only accounts for 6% of the variance, but nevertheless represents several items that the 30 people disagree about. A decision was made not to interpret a third viewpoint as the third viewpoint represented less than 3% of the variance and only 1 person had a pure association with this viewpoint. Therefore, the data indicate two shared viewpoints concerning the 60 NAEYC statements. There were more similarities between all of the 30 participants than there were differences (57% of the variance vs. 6% of the variance).

Participant's Beliefs About What Should Be Considered DAP/DIP

The structure of the two viewpoint arrays can be described in terms of the respondents' beliefs concerning what would be considered the most appropriate practices, the most inappropriate practices, and those practices that were neutral. One of the values of Q-methodology is the interdependency of items when the participants sort each card relative to each other card. In the results and discussion that follow, each item is followed by a number that ranges from -5 to +5. This number represents the point along the continuum (where -5 is most

inappropriate to +5 as most appropriate) that the participants as a group sorted the item. Table 3 provides a list of the 10 most appropriate items, the 10 most inappropriate, and the 10 neutral items. The respondents' beliefs concerning the most appropriate and inappropriate practices are characterized by the two viewpoints and several broad themes within each viewpoint.

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Insert Table 3 about here

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Viewpoint A: Ubiquitous Beliefs

As reflected in Table 1, the 30 respondents expressed a tendency to rank-order the DAP and DIP statements in similar ways (all respondents have high positive associations on Viewpoint A). This is indicative of what Rhoads and Sun (1994) referred to as a dominant component reflecting a conventional pattern of beliefs. The dominance of the first viewpoint lends credence to the portrayal of DAP (as defined by the NAEYC) as a single set of beliefs that represent what may be considered appropriate and inappropriate practices. This view of DAP would seem to concur with Bredekamp's and Copple's (1997, p. vi) belief that the 1997 DAP document reflects "NAEYC's current best understanding of theory and research regarding how children learn as shared beliefs about what practices are most supportive and respectful of children's healthy development." These results are suggestive of a developmental approach to evaluating the relative merits of DAP that supports Escobedo's (1993, p. 215) view that it is important to review developmental issues that "cut across socioeconomic, cultural and language groups such as maturation, sequential developmental stages, and a learning mode based on active, concrete-based experiences." The interrelationship between the items that comprised Viewpoint can be considered a narrative that describes the beliefs of the group of 30 people. An exploration of the subjectivity contained in this narrative revealed three themes than ran through

the items.

Theme 1: Independent Learners. The dominant viewpoint (Viewpoint A) is characterized by a tendency to believe that children should participate in activities that are naturally motivating (Item 12, +5) and used to develop problem solving skills (Item 23, +4). These items support prior ethnographic research about DAP (Karnafel, 1993) where two teachers believed that the focus of ECE was to develop general problem-solving skills and maintain children's enthusiasm and self-confidence for learning.

Generally, the respondents believed it more appropriate for teachers to select activities for children that are based on individual differences (Item 18, +5) than have children select their own activities (Item 41, +3). The relative placement of these items along the DAP/DIP continuum parallels the current belief that teachers should play a more active role in the education of young children. Bredekamp and Rosegrant (1993) described two basic errors in ECE. First is the elementary error where worksheets or workbooks and skills-based instruction have been pushed down into ECE. The second error is that ECE teachers have stood back with the expectation that children would construct their own knowledge without teacher guidance. As Charlesworth, Hart, Burts, and Dewolf (1993) explained, DAP ECE classrooms should be organized and carefully prepared so that teachers play an active role in facilitating a child's acquisition of knowledge. Therefore, the items that help to describe the first viewpoint in this study provide a necessary and delicate link between teacher-designed activities and environments and child-initiated learning.

Another general belief among all the participants was that it was inappropriate for children to participate in too many large group activities sitting at desks (Item 4, -4) and limit children's play (Item 1, -4). These items can be described as activities that reflect current beliefs gained from child development research (see Charlesworth, 1998a, 1998b).

Theme 2: Communication. Within Viewpoint A, the second theme revolved around

communication skills between (a) children and other children (Item 5, +4), (b) children and adults (Item 44, -5: This item stated that children should speak only when spoken to), and (c) teachers and family members working as a partnership (Item 34, +5). It was considered inappropriate for family members to not be included in designing the activities (Item 45, -3). The focus on communication as a theme is consonant with contemporary beliefs in human development that describe a child's development as the result of multiple variables interacting within and across multiple systems. For example, in Bronfenbrenner's model (1979), there is a bi-directional influence between the child and the environment and at the heart of these interactions is the role of the family as an integral part of a child's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). This research supports the 1997 changes to DAP that emphasize communication between children, family members, and teachers.

Theme 3: Diversity. The third theme described a set of beliefs that relate to diversity issues. In addition to respecting diversity in the classroom (Item 6, +3) and believing that it was most inappropriate for a teacher to not consider cultural and individual differences (Item 48, -5), the participants believed it necessary for teachers to be pro-active in diversity issues. Thus, it was believed that teachers should actively explore and discuss cultural and linguistic diversity issues (Item 38, +3), and not segregate children because of ability (Item 27, -3). There also was a belief that children with disabilities should be included in the class in a socially and intellectually active way (Item 46, +4). The theme of respecting individual and cultural differences is well supported in the literature (e.g., Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Delpit, 1995; Hsue & Aldridge, 1994; Lubeck, 1985, 1998a, 1998b; O'Brien, 1997).

These findings suggest that the primary revisions to the 1997 document were warranted. These results add empirical evidence to support the view that the DAP document represent not only teacher's beliefs about appropriate and inappropriate practices in early childhood, but also

parents views. Viewpoint A is a general view held by all the participants and values many types of activities that are interesting to the children and naturally motivating. Many of these items reflect what may be considered appropriate from a developmental perspective. There also is a general belief that values many diversity and cultural issues. As Charlesworth (1998a, p. 277) observed, the "1997 revision of the DAP guidelines emphasized the importance of focusing on the strengths and the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse children."

Although Euro Americans were more likely to be associated with the dominant viewpoint than were African Americans and Arabic participants, all three groups had relatively high (all statistically significantly and noteworthy) associations with the viewpoint. Generally speaking, teachers agree more than parents, and Euro Americans agree more than African Americans with the general viewpoint, but no-one disagreed with Viewpoint A.

Viewpoint B: Divisive Beliefs

The above principles of development stand as a set of beliefs that may represent universal laws of development. As Charlesworth (1998b, p. 295) noted, "I conclude that there are some general universals; the specifics, however, vary relative to our diverse beliefs, values and lifestyles." Empirical evidence of some of these specifics are present within the second viewpoint of this study. As the second viewpoint was independent of the first viewpoint, the beliefs expressed through analysis of this viewpoint can be considered complementary to beliefs expressed within Viewpoint A. Even though this set of beliefs explain a relatively small proportion of the variance (only 6% for the second viewpoint versus 57% for the first viewpoint), the value of the second set of beliefs may be expressed in practical terms. The small but practically significant value of the second viewpoint is analogous to Lewis' (1967) contention that common everyday affairs and events pass us by without mention: it is only significant matters (e.g., the polarized beliefs contained within Viewpoint B) that draw our attention.

Further, Stephenson (1980b, p. 13) recognized that it is "very human, however, to share knowledge mainly when it has special significance."

The bipolar nature of the participant's responses that defined Viewpoint B, resulted in the second viewpoint being described from the perspectives of the individuals who define Viewpoint B (Group X - the traditionalists), and from the beliefs of the individuals who define Viewpoint -B (Group Y - the progressives). For Viewpoint -B, the items that are rated as most inappropriate by the participants who associated positively on this component (-5, -4, -3 in the viewpoint array) may be considered most appropriate by the participants who associated negatively on this particular component. The 10 most appropriate, most inappropriate, and neutral items that helped to define Viewpoint B are shown in Table 4.

Descriptive information about the 18 participants that define Viewpoint -B and the 12 participants that define Viewpoint B are given in Table 1. For this study, the participants who are associated with Viewpoint B tend to be parents who are African American or Arabic, unmarried, and relatively young compared to the respondents who help to define Viewpoint -B. The participant's level of education and religious denomination did not systematically vary by Viewpoint association. Of note are a couple of general themes that tend to define the second viewpoint. The first theme is supported by items that relate to structuring the environment for successful early childhood activities within the classroom. The second theme is reflected in several items that combine to describe varied assessment approaches.

Theme 1: Structure. The Group X traditionalists expressed a belief that teachers and family member's should use workbooks for practice (Item 33, +4), that children's play be limited so that children can focus on their academic work (Item 1, +4), and drill and practice be used and that the children learn best by copying the teacher's example (Item 51, +4). Continuing this theme, there was a belief that an academic level reflecting what all children should know be set

for the whole class, and that level should be followed to make sure that all the material for the year is covered (Item 32, +4). To be able to accomplish these activities, the Group X participants believed that it was necessary for the number of children in the class to be limited by professional standards to ensure that each child receives the individual attention he or she requires from the teacher (Item 10, +5). There also was a general belief that teachers should often use rewards (such as outdoor privileges) for good behavior and punishments (such as "Time Out") for unacceptable behavior (Item 25, +5).

In contrast, the progressives advocate for children using learning strategies (inventing their own spelling, talking informally, and listening to and reading stories and poems to develop language and literacy skills) that may be considered more constructivist in nature. This group felt it appropriate that teachers create an environment where children can take appropriate physical and academic risks (Item 47, -5), where the curriculum is based on the children's prior experiences and should change as the children's interests change (Item 16, -5). In comparison to the progressivists, the traditionalists believed it was more inappropriate for teachers to not possess formal college-level preparation to be qualified to work with young children (Item 42, -4).

Theme 2: Assessment. A second theme that helped to distinguish between the traditionalists and progressivists were items related to assessment. The traditionalists felt that a successful early childhood program (the classroom) should be based on how many of the children are able to perform specific skills such as recognizing the letters of the alphabet or being able to count (Item 3, +5), use workbooks for assessing the child's development (Item 33, +4), and use examples of the child's work (over a period of time) from multiple activities (Item 26, +3) to help teachers gain an idea of a child's development.

The progressivists and traditionalists believed that it is inappropriate to judge a child's

ability on the basis of how well he or she performs on tests that compare the child to children from around the nation (Item 17, -4). However, it was the traditionalists that felt this item to be one of the most inappropriate items out of the 60 statements. The traditionalists felt it was inappropriate that family members be limited in how often they are allowed to visit the children to minimize the disruption caused by the visit (Item 57, -3). Of particular interest was an indication by both groups that they thought it somewhat inappropriate that multiage grouping (children of different ages in the same classroom) be used so that children can develop a strong and lasting relationship with the teacher (Item 60, -3).

Supporting prior research, some of the differences represented in the second viewpoint have been the focal points of recent discussions, particularly in the work of critical theorists. For example, Lubeck (1998a) challenged the universality of the 1997 DAP document and stated that the language of the document "serves to avoid or diminish conflict . . . [and] incorporates challenges and contradictions, making it appear impervious to criticism" (p. 286). This language also has the effect of denying "competing discourses, contradictory results or different ways of imagining what is possible" (Lubeck, 1998a, p. 286). The differences that result from the interpretation of the second viewpoint may well be important in challenging the assumption that it is necessary to always have a general consensus about what is considered DAP and DIP. Differences in beliefs about DAP can be seen in a positive way, and these differences do not need to be resolved (Greene, 1993).

O'Brien (1997), in quoting a teacher who worked in a low-SES area, indicated the relationships between Viewpoint A and Viewpoint B. This teacher believed that children should have the following abilities

> . . . that they're sociable, they can sit in a classroom. They're prepared for kindergarten: I think that's important, too. In fact, I think that's sometimes more important than what Head Start's philosophy is. Because I don't feel sometimes that we prepared the kids

> enough for kindergarten . . . [they need structure] so that they'll succeed in school. (p. 101)

One of O'Brien's conclusions was that there may be no need to separate the developmental from the academic and separate the appropriate from the more structured forms of instruction. Likewise, Lubeck's (1985) seminal study found that Euro-American teachers preferred an individualistic orientation (considered more DAP) to teaching, whereas the African American teachers preferred a more group-oriented approach (considered less DAP).

CONCLUSIONS

As people are rarely fully conscious of their belief systems, Q-methodology provides a way for all early childhood caregivers (whether family members/teachers/administrators/etc.) to make their beliefs operant. As with all research, there are several limitations to this study that should be reiterated. The participants within this study were not a random selection of teachers and family members. Therefore, one should be hesitant to infer that because 12 parents (and no teachers) comprise Viewpoint B, then other parents will necessarily share similar beliefs (Brown, 1980; Stephenson, 1953). All 30 of the research participants were female. Therefore, more research is needed to ascertain whether male teachers and male caregivers have similar or different subjective beliefs about what ECE practices are considered more or less DAP and DIP. As administrators often have control of issues related to curriculum and policy, it is necessary for more research to explore their subjective beliefs about DAP.

Teachers, administrators, and researchers should not assume that all family members have similar beliefs about what are considered appropriate and inappropriate practices in an ECE classroom. Rather than think about a practice as appropriate and inappropriate, we should be critical what Derrida (1982) calls "binary oppositions." Principles of learning and development are more complex than simple dichotomies. If teachers and family members are to work

collaboratively toward the development of the child, teachers should be prepared to justify the approach they take. For example, teachers who wish to alter the curriculum as children's interests change, use invented spelling, challenge children to take appropriate academic and physical risks, etc., may find family members, administrators, or other teachers, who oppose such strategies.

Conversations about the appropriateness/inappropriateness of DAP for all or some children are likely to continue well into the future (Bredekamp, 1991). To date, and as with most successful dialogue, the outcome of past conversations has been a reformation of the 1987 document. Although some people may contend that the changes have not been productive, beliefs about the utility of the DAP document seem to be evolving in a dialectic tradition: Thesis - DAP is for everyone; Antithesis - DAP is not for everyone; Synthesis - Parts of DAP (ECE practices in Viewpoint A) are considered universal, and parts of DAP (ECE practices in Viewpoint B) are appropriate or inappropriate depending on context and culture. This dialectical process is likely to cultivate a powerful document that will well serve the ECE community now and in the future if theoretical concerns and issues are linked with empirical evidence that either support or refute the current structure of the DAP document.

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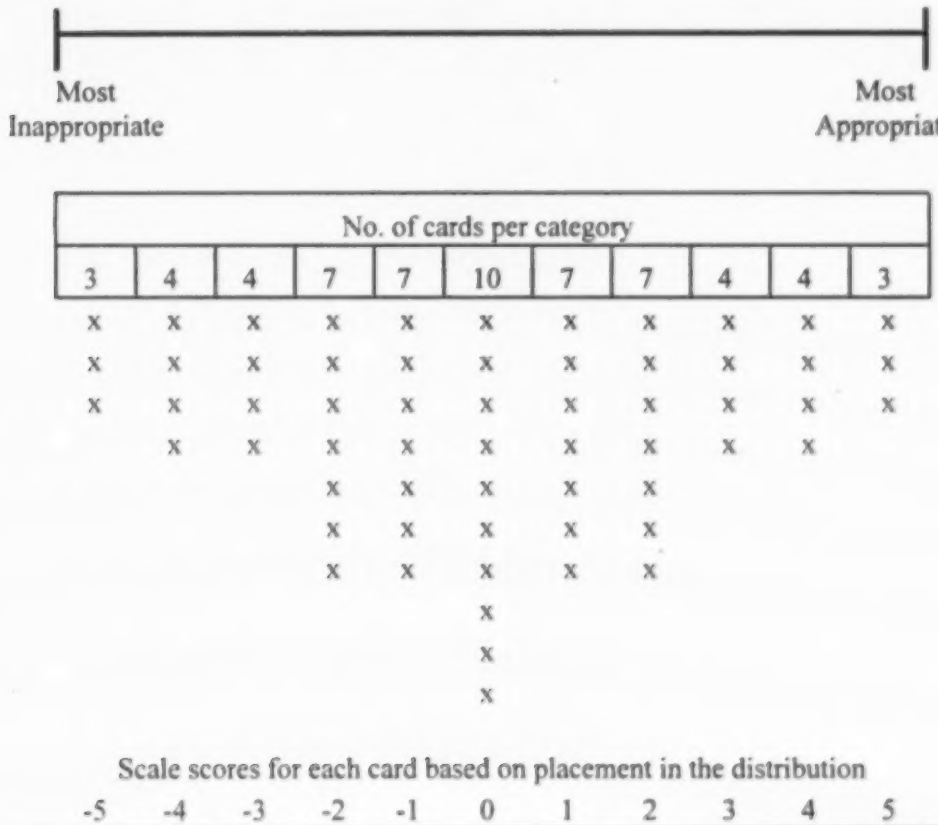
Most
Inappropriate
Most
Appropriate
No. of cards per category
3 4 4 7 7 10 7 7 4 4 3
Scale scores for each card based on placement in the distribution
-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Figure 1. Figure to show the forced distribution of scores. Each x represents a single statement to be placed within the range from most inappropriate to most appropriate practice. The scores for each card represent the numeric value to be attributed to each rank placement.

Table 1

Descriptive Information and Viewpoint Associations For the Thirty Participants

	Center	r[a]	r[b]	h^2	Role[c]	Age	Race[d]	Religious affiliation	Marriage[e]	Ed. level
24	2	0.89	0.11	0.80	FM	40	EA	Methodist	N.M.	17
7	2	0.88	-0.08	0.78	Teacher	36	EA	Catholic	Married	16
20	1	0.86	-0.08	0.75	FM	34	EA	Pentecostal	Married	12
4	1	0.85	-0.27	0.79	Teacher	42	EA	Catholic	Married	17
10	2	0.85	-0.29	0.81	Teacher	30	EA	Catholic	Married	16
6	2	0.84	-0.23	0.76	Teacher	43	EA	Lutheran	Married	12
21	2	0.84	0.25	0.77	FM	24	EA	Catholic	N.M.	13
9	2	0.82	-0.06	0.68	Teacher	39	EA	Catholic	Divorced	19
12	3	0.82	-0.11	0.68	Teacher	42	AF	Full gospel	N.M.	17
14	3	0.82	-0.11	0.69	Teacher	33	EA	Methodist	Married	16
3	1	0.81	-0.33	0.76	Teacher	53	EA	Born again	Divorced	18
28	3	0.81	-0.02	0.66	FM	33	AF	Baptist	Divorced	14
11	2	0.80	-0.08	0.65	Teacher	28	EA	Catholic	N.M.	15
15	3	0.80	-0.25	0.70	Teacher	43	AF	Methodist	Married	14
13	3	0.78	-0.28	0.69	Teacher	37	AF	Methodist	Married	12
23	2	0.78	-0.07	0.61	FM	31	EA	Lutheran	N.M.	15
1	1	0.77	-0.13	0.61	Teacher	-	EA	Catholic	Married	12
8	2	0.77	-0.02	0.59	Teacher	33	EA	Catholic	Separated	12
2	1	0.75	0.09	0.57	Teacher	29	EA	Catholic	Married	18
18	1	0.75	-0.01	0.56	FM	32	Arabic	Muslim	Divorced	15
26	3	0.74	0.18	0.58	FM	26	AF	Other	N.M.	20
17	1	0.71	0.34	0.62	FM	26	Arabic	Muslim	Married	13
5	1	0.70	-0.12	0.50	Teacher	30	Arabic	Muslim	Married	12
19	1	0.69	0.22	0.52	FM	34	AF	Baptist	N.M.	13
29	3	0.68	0.28	0.54	FM	26	AF	Jehovah's W.	Married	15
16	1	0.67	0.36	0.58	FM	22	Arabic	Muslim	Married	13
27	3	0.54	0.28	0.37	FM	33	AF	-	N.M.	15
30	3	0.52	0.43	0.45	FM	28	AF	Pentecostal	N.M.	14
25	3	0.46	0.55	0.51	FM	29	AF	Pentecostal	N.M.	15
22	2	0.40	0.28	0.24	FM	36	AF	Baptist	Married	16

[a]Structure coefficients between the person and Viewpoint A. [b]Structure coefficients between the person and Viewpoint B. [c]FM stands for parent. [d]AF is short for African American and EA is short for Euro-American. [e]N.M. stands for Not Married. Total variance accounted for by Viewpoint A and Viewpoint B were 57% and 6%, respectively.

Table 2

The Ten Most Appropriate, Most Inappropriate and Neutral Statements that Define Viewpoint A

No.	Array score	Statement
12	5	Teachers should motivate the children using activities that children are naturally curious about and interested in.
18	5	When selecting activities for the children, teachers should be aware of, and responsive to, individual differences in children's ability, developmental level, and approach to learning.
34	5	Teachers should work with members of the child's family as a partnership to help the child's learning and development.
5	4	Children's communication skills should be developed throughout the course of the day by encouraging individual and group discussions.
23	4	Teachers should frequently ask the children for different ways to solve a problem thereby developing different strategies for problem solving.
46	4	Children with disabilities or special learning needs should be included in the class not only physically but also intellectually and socially.
58	4	Teachers should help children learn how to establish positive constructive relationships with adults and other children.
6	3	Cultural and individual differences within the community should be respected by the teachers.
38	3	Teachers should bring each child's home culture and language into the classroom so children can learn to respect and appreciate similarities and differences among people.
41	3	Teachers should often provide a wide range of learning experiences so that children are able to select activities they would like to do.
16	0	The curriculum design (what is to be taught in the program) should be based on the children's prior experiences and should change based on the children's interests.
29	0	Assessments should be used to find out how much the child knows and not with how the child comes to know the information (the process of learning).
31	0	It should be acceptable for qualified teachers of older children to work with younger children.
32	0	An academic level reflecting what all children should know should be set for the whole class and should be followed to make sure that all the material for the year is covered.
33	0	Teachers and family members should use workbooks for practice and discovering if a child knows how to write letters, recognize numbers, etc..
35	0	Assessments should provide information concerning how the child solved the problem.
40	0	Children should use strategies including inventing their own spelling, talking informally, reading and listening to stories and poems, to develop language and literacy skills.
50	0	Teachers should always listen to the family members of the children in the program, respecting the goals that the family members have for their children.
54	0	The program should accept children regardless of the child's prior knowledge, ability, or readiness.
60	0	Strategies such as multiage grouping (children of many different ages in the same classroom) are used so that children can develop a strong and lasting relationship with the teacher.
27	-3	Children of the same ability should be kept together and children who do not keep up with the other children should not be allowed to slow the pace of the class down.
39	-3	Teachers should move children from one class to another to make sure there aren't too many children for a single teacher even if it means the children do not settle into a regular class routine.
45	-3	Family members should not interfere in the design of the activities in the classroom because the teachers are the education experts.
1	-4	Children's play should be limited so that the children can focus on their academic work.
4	-4	If older children can work at desks in large groups, younger children should be expected (and trained) to work the same way.

No.	Array score	Statement
19	-4	The administrator's job is managerial and therefore administrators should be more like business people and don't need training in early childhood education.
36	-4	In learning to read, children should first be able to recognize all the letters of the alphabet and sound out all the letters' sounds before they start to look at books.
43	-5	To teach children toileting skills, teachers should let the children know that they should be ashamed if there's an accident.
44	-5	Teachers should encourage family members to make sure the child knows that adults are always in charge and should not be questioned (e.g., children should only speak when spoken to).
48	-5	In the classroom, it is not important to consider cultural and other individual differences.

Table 3

The Ten Most Appropriate, Most Inappropriate and Neutral Statements That Define Viewpoint B

No.	Array score	Statement
25	5	Teachers should often use rewards (such as outdoor privileges) for good behavior and punishments (such as "Time Out") for unacceptable behavior.
3	5	How successful the early childhood program (the classroom) is should be based on how many of the children are able to perform specific skills (such as recognizing the letters of the alphabet, being able to count, etc.).
10	5	The number of children in the class should be limited by professional standards to ensure that each child receives the individual attention they require from the teacher.
32	4	An academic level reflecting what all children should know should be set for the whole class and should be followed to make sure that all the material for the year is covered.
33	4	Teachers and family members should use workbooks for practice and discovering if a child knows how to write letters, recognize numbers, etc.
1	4	Children's play should be limited so that the children can focus on their academic work.
51	4	Teachers should often use drill and practice in the classroom and the best way for children to learn skills is to copy the teacher's example as closely as possible.
26	3	Examples of the child's work (over a period of time) from multiple activities should be used to give the teacher a good idea of the child's development.
24	3	The flow of information should be from the teacher to the family member so that the family knows what to do to help their children learn.
15	3	The administrators of the programs that serve young children should have professional knowledge of children's learning and development.
13	0	Teachers should be expected to engage in ongoing professional development activities (e.g., university study, attending workshops, etc.) to remain in their teaching positions.
50	0	Teachers should always listen to the family members of the children in the program, respecting the goals that the family members have for their children.
52	0	Teachers should integrate different content areas together (e.g., math / science / art) such as exploring patterns in math or counting blocks in the block center.
28	0	Children should often work in their seats on teacher chosen activities and talking among children should be kept to a minimum.
12	0	Teachers should motivate the children using activities that children are naturally curious about and interested in.

No.	Array score	Statement
18	0	When selecting activities for the children, teachers should be aware of, and responsive to, individual differences in children's ability, developmental level, and approach to learning.
21	0	Teachers should make sure that the child's culture should not be allowed to interfere with the goals of the class.
36	0	In learning to read, children should first be able to recognize all the letters of the alphabet and sound out all the letters' sounds before they start to look at books.
20	0	Prior to entering the program, teachers should test the child using a 'readiness test' to determine whether the child is ready for the year's work.
37	0	Teachers should maintain order in the classroom by restricting talking and separating friends who talk all the time.
54	-3	The program should accept children regardless of the child's prior knowledge, ability, or readiness.
60	-3	Strategies such as multiage grouping (children of lots of different ages in the same classroom) are used so that children can develop a strong and lasting relationship with the teacher.
57	-3	Family members should be limited in how often they are allowed to visit the children to minimize the disruption caused by the visit.
43	-4	To teach children toileting skills, teachers should let the children know that they should be ashamed if there's an accident.
17	-4	How well the child is doing in the program should be measured by how well the children perform on tests that compare the child to children from around the nation.
39	-4	Teachers should move children from one class to another to make sure there aren't too many children for a single teacher even if it means the children do not settle into a regular class routine.
42	-4	Teachers should not have to possess formal college-level preparation to be qualified to work with young children. As long as adults care for the children this should qualify them as suitable for the job.
16	-5	The curriculum design (what is to be taught in the program) should be based on the children's prior experiences and should change based on the children's interests.
47	-5	Teachers should create an environment where the child can take appropriate physical and academic risks.
40	-5	Children should use strategies including inventing their own spelling, talking informally, listening to and reading stories and poems to develop language and literacy skills.